

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## After Spending Hours At Sea, Propane Tanks Land At WAPA

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The first two of eight propane tanks to arrive at the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority, St. Croix plant, appeared to be stuck in the ocean for about four hours on Saturday. But after much banter with the currents, the tanks landed safely, marking a new era in WAPA's quest to transform itself into a more cost-efficient entity.



Propane tanks arrive at WAPA

The *VI Consortium* visited the St. Croix plant late yesterday, and while we were not granted access to the barge itself because of compliance issues, WAPA employee, Kevin Smalls, was kind enough to send us some pictures he had taken as the tanks made landfall.

There are 18 propane tanks in all: eight for St. Croix and 10 for St. Thomas. Smalls said the reason for the tanks' long delay at sea was because it was WAPA's first effort in performing such a task and workers wanted to ensure all safety precautions were taken.

### Projected Savings

Once the propane tanks are installed and operable, WAPA promises savings of 30 percent on power bills.

"We still anticipate a 30 percent reduction in the cost of fuel, which will be passed along directly to customers," WAPA boss Hugo Hodge [said in August](#). Adding that the semi-autonomous entity was looking "forward with great anticipation to providing these benefits to the community. Our entire team is focused on finishing this complex project as quickly



WAPA employee looks on as barge arrives at

plant

### 'Streetlights Bill' Outcry

Last Tuesday night, senators of the 30th Legislature passed a measure that [gives WAPA the authority to bill customers for streetlights usage](#), sending the Virgin Islands into an uproar, the likes of which have not been seen in a long time. The *VI Consortium* broke the story, which was seen by more than 30,000 readers online, and prompted concerned citizens to start [two petitions](#) to stop the measure from taking effect.

In fact, the outcry became so loud that At-Large Senator Craig Barshinger, who is not seeking re-election but who voted for the bill, visited *VI Consortium* to announce he is no longer in support of the measure, and will be [crafting legislation](#), along with Senator Clarence Payne -- who also voted in favor of the bill -- to repeal it.

If the repeal is successful, residents' savings of 30 percent, once WAPA completes its propane tank installation project, called 'Operation Game Changer', would remain intact. If the repeal fails, then senators of the 30th Legislature would have added yet another expense to households.

Senators who voted for and against the measure to give WAPA the authority to bill customers for the usage of public streetlights are as follows:

1. Senator Craig Barshinger — **Yes**
2. Senator Judi Buckley — *No*
3. Senator Diane Capehart — **Yes**
4. Senator Donald G. Cole — **Yes**
5. Senator Kenneth Gittens — *No*
6. Senator Clifford Graham — **Yes**
7. Senator Alicia “Chucky” Hansen — *No*
8. Senator Myron Jackson — **Yes**
9. Senator Shawn-Michael Malone — **Yes**
10. Senator Terrence “Positive” Nelson — *No*
11. Senator Nellie Rivera-O'Reilly — *No*
12. Senator Clarence Payne — **Yes**
13. Senator Tregenza A. Roach — *No*
14. Senator Sammuel Sanes — *No*
15. Senator Janette Millin Young — **Yes**